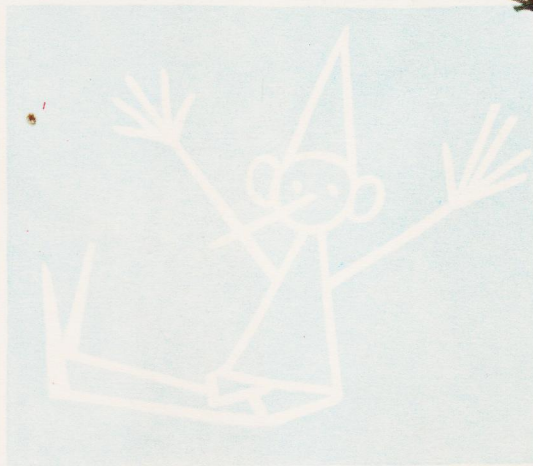


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Y.Akim

Helpless Can't-Do



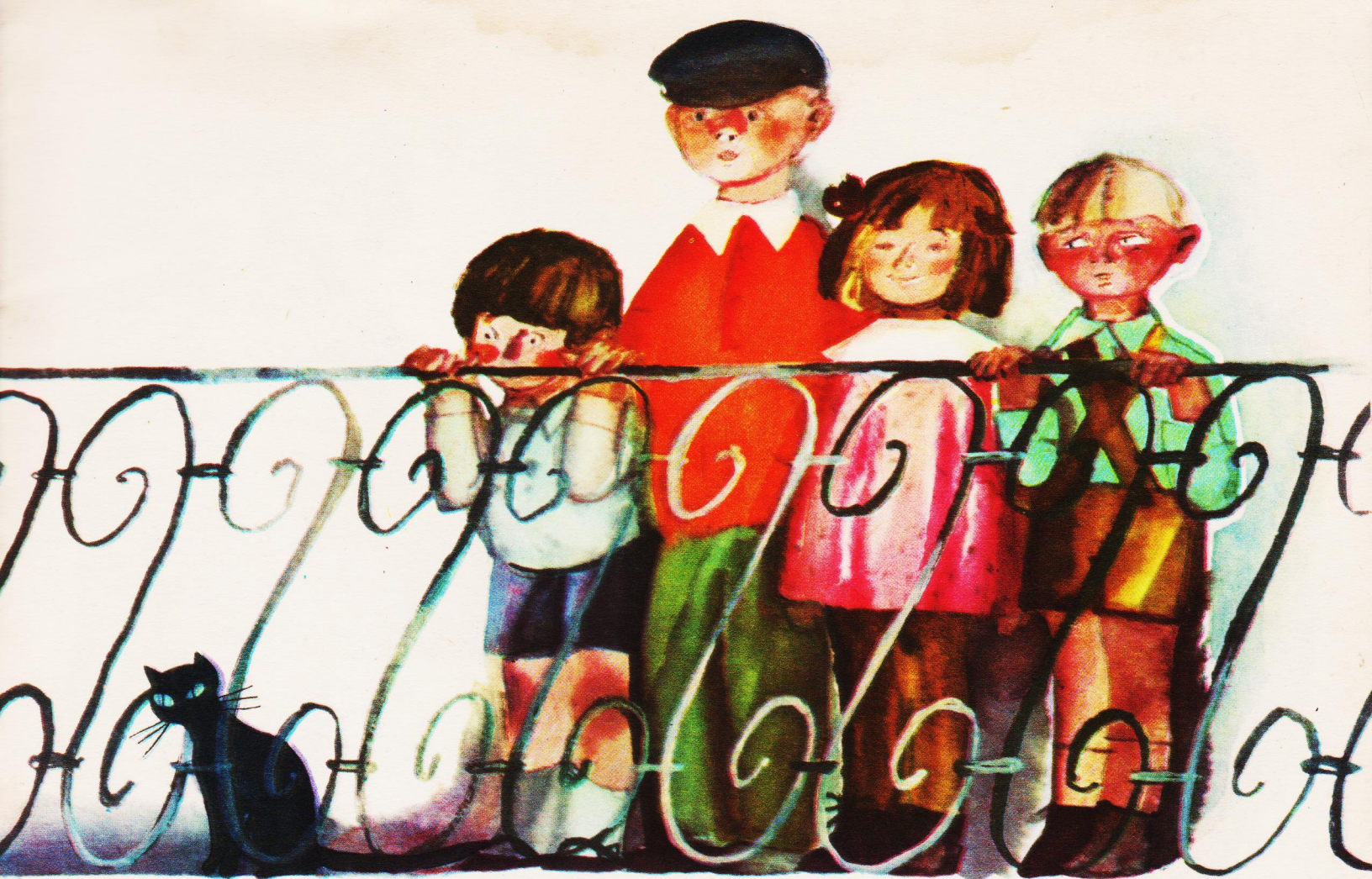
Y. Akim



Helpless Can't-Do



For Helpless
Can't-Do



Have you
Heard the tale
About House
Number Four,

Where the mailman
Went calling
From door to door?

• The letter was tattered
And torn at the flap,

“FOR HELPLESS CAN’T-DO”
Was the address
It had.

The young
Mailman stopped
On the very first floor

And saw Vova from
Where he stood
By the door.



Each spoon of soup
Was washed down
With a story.

"Can't-Do, here's your letter,
Though I'm quite sorry."

The boy grabbed the spoon
From his mother
In fright.

"Can't-Do doesn't live here!"
His mother
replied.



*For Helpless
Can't-Do*



Andrei is the boy
Who lives
Above Vova.

His room is a mess,
A wreck,
Toys all over.

"Can't-Do isn't me!"
He got up from the floor
And said
When he heard
Who the letter was for,

"I'll finish
The house
That I'm building of blocks,
And then put
My playthings
All back in the box."



The mailman
Turned round then
And knocked on the door

Of Slava's
Apartment,
Which was twenty-four.





For Helpless
Cant-Do

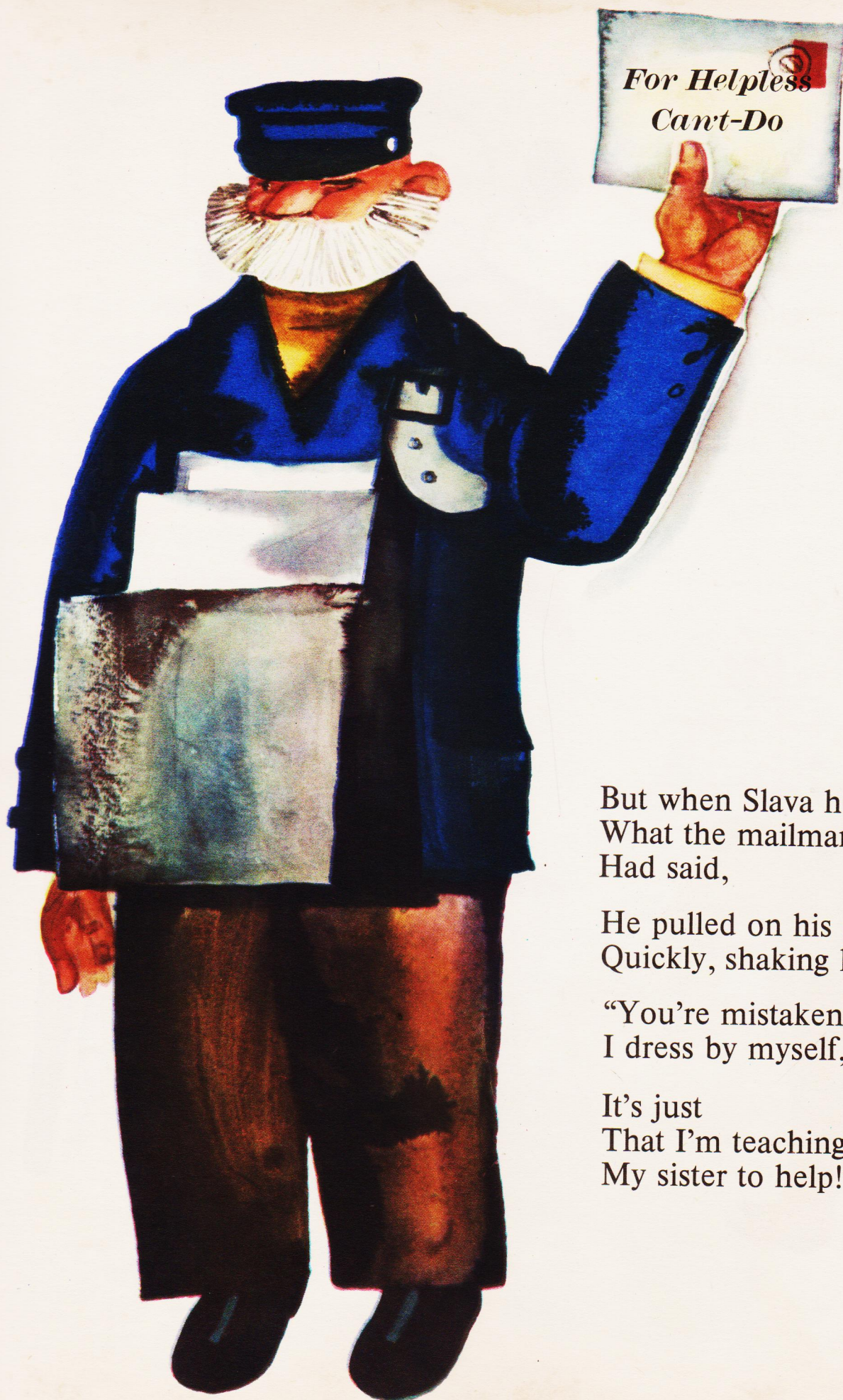
His sister
Was pulling
His socks on for him.

While Slava
Was yawning
And scratching his chin.

"Oho!" said the mailman,
"I've found you at last!"

You're Helpless Can't-Do,
I can see at a glance!"





But when Slava heard
What the mailman
Had said,

He pulled on his socks
Quickly, shaking his head.

"You're mistaken, I'm sure,
I dress by myself,

It's just
That I'm teaching
My sister to help!"



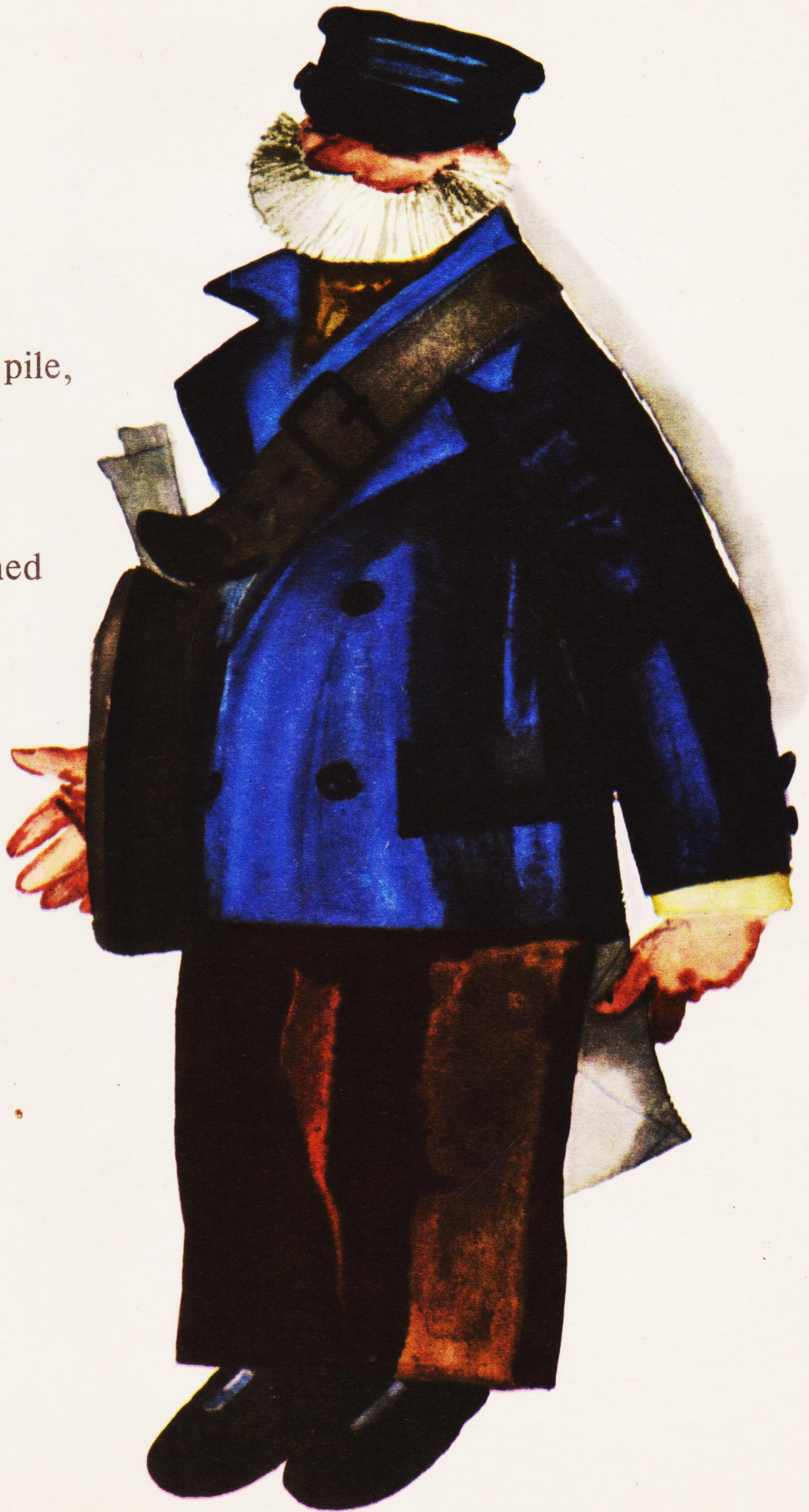
To reach
The next door
Was a very short walk.

The mailman
Was asked
To the kitchen to talk.

The dishes
Were washed
And were stacked in a pile,
While mother
And daughter
Were wiping them dry.

The mailman then sighed
And said
With a grin,

"Excuse me,
I see
I'm mistaken again."





The mailman went out
To the garden
To rest,

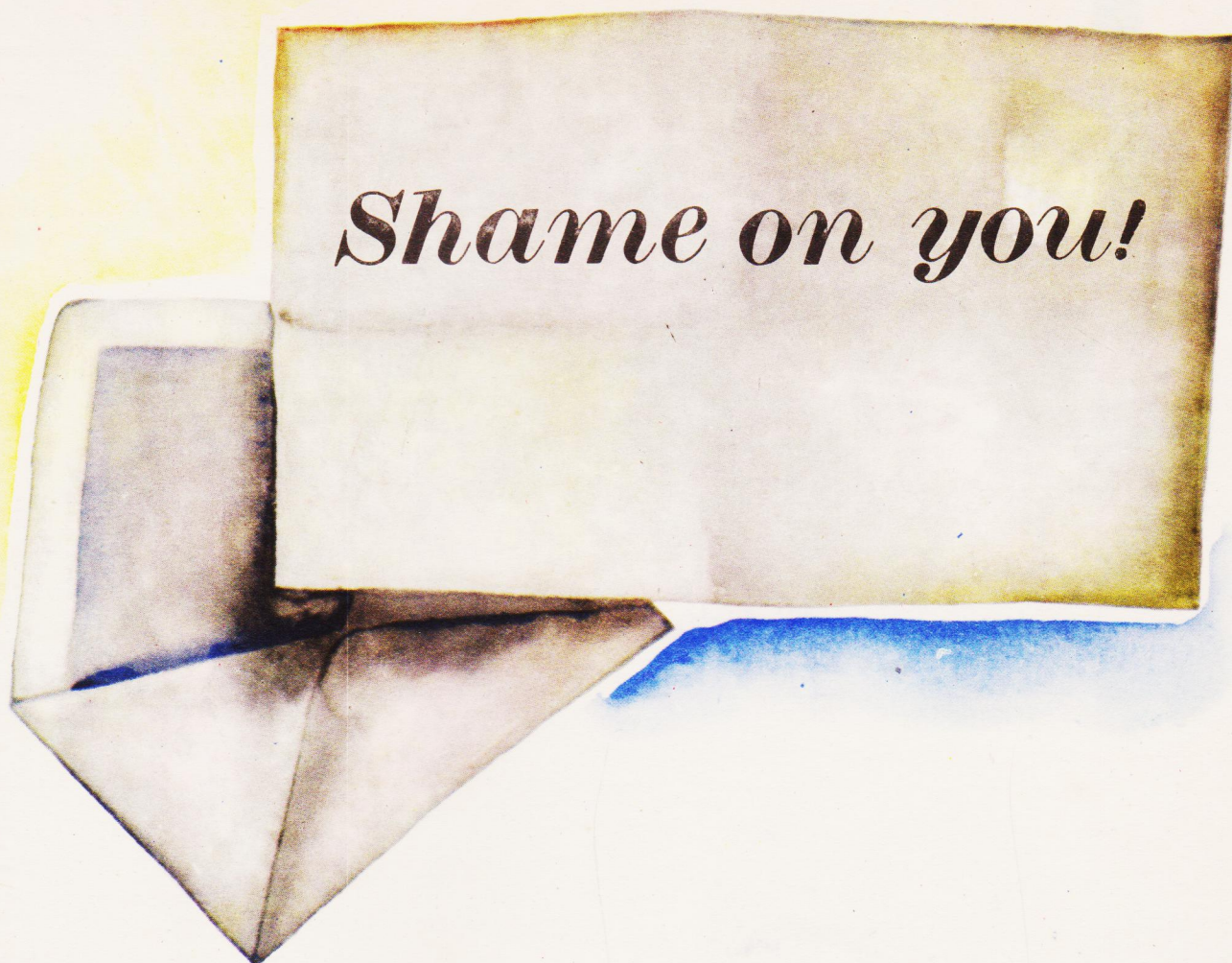
And there
He saw Boris,
A boy he had missed.

He was watering flowers
That grew all around.

Alas!
Helpless Can't-Do
Was not
To be found!

The mailman sat down
On a bench
By a birch,
Before he set off
To continue his search.





The letter has gone
Back and forth, to and fro,
I'll tell you what's in it,
If you want to know.

There's one line of writing,
It says,

“SHAME ON YOU!”

Of course, no one wants to be
Helpless Can't-Do!

And so I will say
Before parting,
My dears,
I hope that this letter
Will travel for years!



Translated from the Russian by *Fainna Glagoleva*

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